

From: "Charles Ashley" <wattsvillepreservation@gmail.com>  
To: <clausenb@energy.state.ca.us>  
CC: <carl.zichella@sierraclub.org>, <cadesertco@gmail.com>  
Date: 1/15/2009 10:49 AM  
Subject: RETI Plenary in Palm Desert

To the RETI group regarding the January 10 meeting:

I wish I could say that the RETI Plenary held in Palm Desert was something other than a poorly organized dog and pony show, but that's all it was.

I say "poorly organized" because the "system" that "served" those of us who connected via telephone was clearly only a perfunctory and ill-conceived after-thought. The speakers' voices were hardly audible over the crowd noise. At one point I was even treated to a private conversation between a man and his wife or girl friend, to whom the man said, "I'm not going to stay around here too much longer, Honey. Do you want to go out tonight?"

I got to listen to the same break-out session four times since whoever set up the meeting didn't plan to cycle all four break-outs by the single microphone. I know there have been budget cutbacks in Sacramento; but the big shots running this show ought to be able to do better than this. After all, they are planning the "smart grid." They are going to synchronize all those thousands of gigawatts of active power and manage millions of MVARs of reactive support. Scary thought, that.

I wish I could say that this meeting was atypical. Unfortunately, it was not. Chaos and disorganization have been pretty much par for the course at all the teleconferences having to do with planning the grid that I have attended over the past year with utilities like PG&E and the CAISO as well as RETI. I hope I can expect better from the PUC if the project that threatens my area ever gets there. Having followed the Sunrise Powerlink fiasco, I haven't got high hopes.

The more I see of the "process," the less confidence I have in the judgment and skill of those making the decisions. Process indeed--like processing sausage! Sadly, most of the consumers don't care or want to know what goes into it, a fact of human nature of which those who make sausage and plan the grid seem well aware.

In any case, I want to raucously and rudely voice my support for the many present at the meeting opposed to utility scale generation and transmission facilities being planned for the Mojave Desert and Imperial County. The people from the California Desert Coalition and several other groups have it right: There is a better way than dependence on the corporate utilities and their huge, ugly, and destructive monstrosities. We need to solve the global warming problem with local community renewable generation. The technologies now exist for this solution, and Bill Powers' Smart Energy 2020 plan shows how it can be done.

The RETI process is mere greenwashing. It is a paper mill --a \*mythograph\* to coin a term--to generate thousands of pages of reports

steeped in technical jargon and "expert analysis," whose actual purpose finally is to legitimize greed and ugliness. The purpose of this meeting on January 10 was to provide the utilities and regulatory agencies cover so that when they put the hammer down on the desert, they can say, "We had public meetings and solicited public input." Nothing more. It is smoke and mirrors--poorly choreographed smoke and mirrors at that--to legitimize evil.

Leave the desert and the Sierra alone! Let us the inhabitants of the Sierra and the desert live our lives in peace free from your unwanted colonization of our beautiful lands. The desert and Sierra are and must remain places of solitude and reflection. Let the so-called "load centers"--translate big cities--provide for themselves without encroaching on us! We don't want or care to serve their "load," and we aren't fooled by their load of bull!

Thank you,  
Charles M. Ashley  
[www.savethefoothills.org](http://www.savethefoothills.org)